

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification as follows:

Please replace the paragraph on line 9 of page 11 with the following replacement paragraphs:

Brief description of the drawing

Figure 1 shows the functional characterization of *mpa*.

Detailed description of the invention

Please replace the text and figure on page 43 spanning line 13 to the end of page the page to delete the figure and replace the paragraph of text, as follows:

Sequence data for *mpa* was compared against known sequences using the BLASTN 1.4.11 [24-Nov-97] [Build 24-Nov-97] search facility at NCBI (website: [ncbi\[.\]nml\[.\]nih\[.\]gov\[/\]/\[slash\] genbank\[/\]/\[slash\]](http://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/genbank)) on GenBank Flat File release 105.0 (release date 15.02.98). Homologues to *mpa* were found in acetylases from *S.typhimurium*, *S.flexneri* and *R.leguminosarum*. The function of this ORF as an acetylase is strengthened by its very high similarity in hydrophobicity plots of homologues (see Figure 1).

